



Chefs Move TO SCHOOLS

Serving School Meals that Meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Meal Pattern Requirements

What are the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and why are they important in school meals?

The Dietary Guidelines are the cornerstone of America's nutrition policy and federal nutrition programs. The guidelines are reviewed and updated every five years by a nationwide advisory committee of experts in nutrition, science and public health. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines remain the current guidance until the 2010 Dietary Guidelines are published later this year.

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program must serve lunches that meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and provide at least minimum calorie levels and one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron and calcium. For more detailed information on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, visit <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2005Guidelines.htm>.

Where can I get help in planning meals that meet the Guidelines?

Team Nutrition <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html> offers many helpful materials such as a set of *Fact Sheets for Healthier School Meals* covering topics from reducing sodium to serving more whole grains. Developed for school foodservice professionals, these Fact Sheets offer strategies for purchasing, preparing, and serving meals consistent with the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

The site also offers a comprehensive [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) and a [Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals](#).

In addition, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science (IOM) released a 2009 report, *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children* (<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2009/School-Meals-Building-Blocks-for-Healthy-Children.aspx>), which made specific recommendations for increasing the amounts of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; reducing saturated fat and sodium; and setting a minimum and maximum number of calories in school meals. USDA is issuing new program regulations which address these recommendations. In the meantime, the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) is a voluntary program which recognizes schools that meet many of the goals contained in the IOM report. More information about the HUSSC can be found at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/healthierUS/index.html>.